1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34

Low as wages are, Rendón collected an account which indicates that wages were only 12 centavos a day within the lifetime of elderly men. The informant stated that he preferred to work at Nahuatzen because meals were included in the wage, which is not the case in Cherán. This requires verification, as Nahuatzen normally has a larger labor supply than Cherán.

In addition to paid labor or labor for one's own account, men are required to perform certain public services. These include maintenance of the aqueduct and improvement of roads and trails. Young men may also be required to do certain work in connection with fiestas, particularly the fiesta of the patron saint and the Day of the Dead. There is also obligatory assistance of relatives in connection with ceremonials and house moving. These requirements are dealt with later.

No data were secured on the relation between labor demand and labor supply. As indicated by the presence of labor from other towns at some seasons, it is believed that at peak periods there is an undersupply of labor in the town. Much of the year, however, there probably is a labor surplus in the sense that many farmers often have time free which they could use in some other employment were it readily available.

CAPITAL

Efforts to define capital for Cherán meet with the same difficulties that are to be met with in our own society. Money used for purchasing food ordinarily is not considered capital; yet insofar as it makes the individual capable of producing additional goods or services through which his wealth is increased, such money, or stores of food accumulated for this purpose, might be considered capital. Money accumulated to buy land for the production of food for sale or export would usually be considered capital; is the land purchased to be so considered also? In the case of Cherán, I think it is, for, although most farmers would not so regard it, a considerable number of Cherán men have bought land for the express purpose of increasing wealth, not through their own efforts, but through those of a tenant farmer.

471 556 Ownership of livestock similarly poses questions. The wealthy man who keeps a considerable number of bulls whose main use seems to be to enhance his social prestige by having the bulls selected for riding at a fiesta may also sell them for beef if he needs money for productive enterprises. Sheep are capital in much the same sense that land is capital. A yoke of oxen or a burro may be used to aid production and are also rented. A horse, on the other hand, is close to a "conspicuous expenditure."

471 Probably the minimal capital required in Cherán is for the production of certain services. A water carrier needs only two 25-liter oil cans, a bit of rope, and a piece of wood to make a [313] yoke. A *tabla* maker (one producing heavy hewn planks or beams) needs only an ax and some oak wedges he cuts out himself, and 10 [474] pesos to join the cooperative (formerly he would have needed only enough to pay the tax for use of communal lands). A digging stick and a knife would suffice to gather *raiz de paja*, while herbs need only a bit of cloth to tie them in. At the other extreme are the owners of threshing machines, *nixtamal* mills, or trucks, the latter requiring a cash outlay of between 8 and 10 thousand pesos.

For the farmer, aside from land, very few capital goods are necessary. Ox teams and plows may be rented and paid for out of the crop; even land may be secured on a sharecrop basis. A special *machete* for weeding is, in fact, the only indispensable tool. Such farming, however, will bring a relatively small return, probably little, if any, more than could be earned by a hired laborer.

At the other extreme, a landowner, farming his own land, should own an ox team, yoke, plow, *machete*, burros, and nets for transporting the crop, adequate storage facilities, and sufficient cash to hire labor at crucial periods such as planting and harvesting. A man so situated will reap the best possible return from his labor.

The major investment of a farmer is in land, storage facilities, and livestock. His ox yoke and plow he may make himself, and the few metal tools needed are not costly. In general, the investment in tools and equipment is much less than that required in manufacturing or some service occupations. A sewing machine

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471 is more costly than all the farmer's tools, especially the heavy type required to make hats. Even the sandal maker's lasts, hammers, and knives probably are more expensive than farm equipment.

CREDIT, LOANS, AND INTEREST

452 426 No organized credit facilities exist in the village, but money loans are sometimes made. Storekeepers are perhaps the only group who consistently make use of credit and who also often make loans if they have capital. The major use of credit by storekeepers is to buy goods, especially cloth. Sometimes a down payment is made on cloth, the balance being paid when the cloth is sold. This facility seems to be extended primarily by wholesalers in [431] Purépero. Most ordinary store transactions, whether buying or selling, are for cash.

One storekeeper also makes cash loans, mainly to butchers and *nixtamal* operators, who are apt to need considerable sums for a short time. The reported interest rate is 10 percent a month.

Other credit transactions are of two kinds. Most significant is the lending of money for which lands are given as security, known as the *empeño de terrenos*. In this type of transaction, the lender takes possession of the lands and utilizes them until the debt is repaid. The owner in the meantime must pay all taxes on the land. In other cases the lender does not take possession of the lands unless the debt is not repaid at the end of a term agreed upon. In either case, should the land have a standing crop at the time the lender takes possession, the crop is divided equally between the borrower and lender. There are some cases, although relatively few compared with the situation in many parts of Mexico, where lands have been held and cultivated by the lender for many years.[22] The owners have been unable to pay the debt but have continued year after year paying the taxes, in hopes ultimately of redeeming the land.

[423] [556] [22] In some parts of Mexico this is an extremely common form of exploitation. I have been told of regions where families have acquired control of large areas by encouraging small landowners to go into debt to them. The lenders have, in effect, established *haciendas*, but have been overlooked in the general agrarian reforms because the lands appear on the government records as belonging to numerous small owners. Often, ironically enough, the landowners are hired laborers working their own property in a futile effort to redeem their debts, but they never succeed in doing more than maintaining a large estate tax-free for the wealthy *hacendado*.

2:Carrasco F-4, 5 (1945)1952
[P. 159] NU34 Tarasco NU34
Pátzcuaro

175 423 668 This fight turned out to be an attack on inalienable landed property in general, including the Indian communal lands. The purpose was to free those lands thus removed from commerce and throw them to the free play of the market, creating a class [565] of small farmer-owners with a well developed idea of property which would make for social and economic progress.

175 669 423 The abolition of landownership by civil and ecclesiastical corporations was first written into law in 1856 and incorporated into the 1857 constitution during the period of Mexican history known as the *Reforma*.[21] The enforcement of these measures, in so far as they concerned the lands of Indian towns, was usually delayed until the end of the nineteenth century.[22]

175 423 648 The Indians' communal lands were allotted as private property among the villagers. Once the property title was in individual hands, with the possibility of being sold to anybody, outsiders found the way open to acquire land which, through communal land title, had formerly been reserved for the villagers. The greater economic power of the non-Indians, and frequently unfair practices, allowed them to acquire a great amount of land from Indian villages. The concentration of land in haciendas and the impoverishment of the villages were thus facilitated. This process was accelerated during the Porfirio Díaz regime (1877-1911) because of the general economic progress of that period. [471] The inflow of capital, building of railroads, development of mining and other industries, also led to a rise of land values and an increase of capital seeking to invest in land.[23]

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175 423 668 648 In summary, after the reforms of the end of the nineteenth century, the haciendas grew enormously at the expense of the formerly communal land of the village communities or of land allotted to individual Indians who were not able to keep possession. On the other hand, the remaining village communities changed from units of peasant joint owners to rural aggregates of individual farmer-owners.

The growth of the haciendas at the expense of the land-holding villages and the change within the villages from communal to private property represented the general national trend of change in rural Mexico,

21. Phipps, 1925, 77.
22. Callcott, 1931, 136.
23. Phipps, 1925, Chs. 5, 6, 7; Molina Enríquez, 1909, 56-8.